

the modern sport ideology, will also find her discussion of these important aspects disappointing.

Nonetheless, Burstyn provides an effective cross-section of an enormously complex subject. Her attention to the connections between war, the hypergendered sexuality portrayed in popular culture, especially with the expanding twentieth-century influence of the mass media, the increasing admiration for the champion who would endure pain and engage in a measured violence in the interests of victory, and their relationship to the sport nexus, make this a richly textured and engaging study. And many will be heartened by her concluding recommendations – in the interests of balancing masculine and feminine elements in our culture and encouraging respect for our fellows, our bodies, and our biosphere – by “reclaim[ing] physical culture from corporate culture” (p. 276).

Cynthia Comacchio
Wilfrid Laurier University

Robert A. Campbell. *Sit Down and Drink Your Beer: Regulating Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Pp. 185.

We should all raise a glass to Robert Campbell. His careful, insightful scholarship has opened up the important, but long neglected, history of alcohol consumption in Canada after the end of prohibition in the 1920s. He has followed up his earlier path-breaking book on British Columbia's regulatory regime for booze with this fascinating examination of public drinking in Vancouver in the first thirty years of “government control.” This was the period in which, outside Quebec, Canada's only licensed drinking establishments were known as “beer parlours” or “beverage rooms,” operated as adjuncts of hotels, and sold nothing but beer. Their customers were preponderantly working-class men. Campbell reminds us that governments did not simply repeal prohibition, but instituted a new system of liquor *control* intended to restrain consumption. Liquor-board regulations severely restricted drinkers' behaviour in beer parlours to make them as unattractive as possible and to prevent them from evolving into old-time saloons. Patrons could drink only while seated and could not

carry their drinks between tables. They could not eat, dance, sing, play games or musical instruments, or watch entertainers. And they had to drink moderately and not get drunk. A new inspectorate was sent out to watch for violations.

Campbell labels this new approach to controlling drinkers the “discourse of decency.” He folds in postmodern analysis (notably Foucault’s notion of “governmentality”) to explain how there was more than merely state coercion at work here. Both proprietors and their staff, who were required to enforce the law, and the customers themselves, played a role in shaping the culture of the mid-twentieth-century Canadian beer parlour. Campbell traces the distinct dynamics of class, gender, and race within that culture.

From the beginning, state regulations were premised on the expectation that most drinkers would be working-class men and would therefore require close control. Enforcement was mediated by other factors, however. Beer-parlour owners had an interest in making their customers comfortable enough to want to buy their booze, while the front-line enforcers who were expected to keep the customers in line were unionized working-class waiters closely attuned to their clientele (and often heavy drinkers themselves). In practice, this meant workingmen could regularly push the limits of the rules – getting drunk, bursting into song, jumping up to fight, or more quietly placing bets with bookies, sometimes with the collusion of owners and staff. Drinkers’ sense of entitlement to good service (including full glasses) as a reward for hard work could nonetheless lead them into conflicts with staff.

Class behaviour thus survived within the regulatory shell, but it was bound up with gender identities. Workingmen often shared the qualms of the liquor-control board and hotel proprietors about allowing women into beer parlours. Female servers were banned, and female customers found in such places were morally suspect. Yet many determined women contested their exclusion from the world of public drinking, insisted on their own “decency,” and were soon allowed into separate spaces for “ladies and escorts,” eventually partitioned off, where single men could not enter. By the 1940s female patrons nonetheless still faced suspicions of passing on venereal disease, as public drinking and unrestrained sexuality remained closely linked in the minds of the regulators. Ironically, a challenge to conventional masculinities came from a different direction – Vancouver’s emerging gay and lesbian communities seemed to be able to make use of beer parlours with little concerted interference from state officials as long as their activities remained discreet.

The other potential customers who might be unwelcome in beer parlours were people of colour. First Nations peoples were barred outright by federal legislation until 1951, and even after that date confronted hostility from owners and customers. Asians were explicitly prevented from holding licences or working in drinking establishments and would consequently be unlikely to find beer parlours comfortable environments. African-Canadians faced more informal exclusion, especially when black men arrived with white women. Members of these groups nonetheless found it possible to quietly negotiate some space for themselves in Vancouver's public-drinking sector.

By the late 1940s the ways that beer parlours actually functioned suggested that the original goals of the moral regulators had been considerably compromised. Postwar middle-class interest in public drinking ran up against a lack of "decency" that made these establishments unattractive. Political pressure for a new form of legalized tavern ultimately produced the "cocktail lounge," which could serve spirits as well as beer, but whose decor, dress codes, and pricing policies would deter most working-class drinkers. Beer parlours continued on with few changes.

The picture that Campbell presents is thus one that does not fit comfortably into any simple social control theory. State coercion was ever present and heavy-handed but constantly mediated, negotiated, and resisted by the human actors involved in the process of selling and consuming beverage alcohol. This is a compelling, sophisticated analysis, presented succinctly in clear, highly readable prose.

I would, however, have been grateful if the author had taken a little more space to explore two additional dimensions of this complex interplay of commodity, state, and market. First, we get primarily the regulatory gaze and far less about the consumers' construction of beer-parlour culture. Part of the reason that inspectors, owners, and waiters faced such persistent challenges and that middle-class Canadians were so uncomfortable in these places was not simply that there were too many fights, drunkards, or loose women, but that proletarian men made real efforts to recreate much of the life of the old saloons within this new framework. They cultivated occupational, ethnic, community, and gendered identities and practices that were distinctively masculine and working class. Campbell might have pursued a bit further this new class-based bar-room culture and its relationship to the larger working-class communities of Vancouver in the period between the

1920s and 1950s, a period of significant transitions and profound changes. Interviews might have helped to flesh out that story.

Second, beer was not merely a morally regulated substance, but also a highly commercialized product. In this period it was being promoted by much larger corporate owners (like E.P. Taylor's Canadian Breweries) that sought to connect its consumption with new patterns of consumerism, especially once fuller employment during and following the war increased the disposable income of many more Canadians. By the 1940s the moral regulation of leisure was confronting a much-generalized challenge from its old arch-enemy, commercialization. The story of Vancouver's beer parlours might have been more directly connected to this broader context.

Despite his relative silence on these issues, Campbell has his finger firmly on the pulse of an extremely important neighbourhood institution that drew in hundreds of thousands of men across the country. We will need to know much more about such places in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries if we want to untangle the complex dynamics of class, gender, and race in Canadians' leisure activities. His perceptive study has certainly set the pace for future investigations of public drinking in Canada.

Craig Heron
York University

Mélanie Chabot. *L'éducation des adultes au Québec (1930-1980). Témoignages*. Préface d'Émile Ollivier. Montréal, Éditions Saint-Martin, 2002, 92 p.

L'éducation des adultes est un phénomène culturel et social qui n'a pas commencé avec la Révolution tranquille. Le livre de Mélanie Chabot nous le rappelle utilement dès son point de départ en établissant une double périodisation, la première s'échelonnant de la fin des années 1930 au début des années 1960, et la seconde des années 1960 au début des années 1980.

Exercice de mémoire, dont l'ambition est d'apporter une contribution originale à l'histoire de l'éducation des adultes au Québec, le document de Chabot repose essentiellement sur les témoignages de dix-sept artisans, qui, sur cinq décennies, ont